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ABSTRACT

Included in this annotated bibliography of 11 publications concerning initiating change in schools are 5 citations that specifically address the role of the principal. The more general title of administrator is the topic of one report while the behaviors of high school department heads are the subject of a research report. One additional publication reviewed deals with dimensions of organizational health that principals can use to rate their schools, and another discusses eight areas of organization and climate, making recommendations for each area to implement school improvement projects. The remaining two citations concern leadership and change in schools. (MLF)

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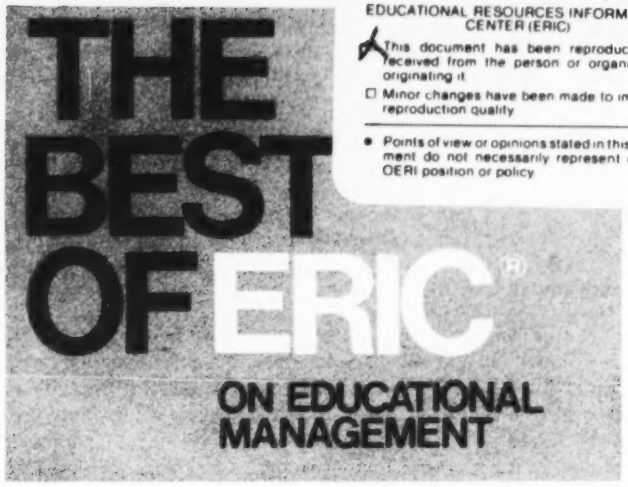

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Initiating Change in Schools

1 **Clark, Elizabeth, and Marvin Fairman**. "Organizational Health: A Significant Force in Planned Change." *NASSP Bulletin* 67, 464 (September 1983): 108-113. EJ 286 645.

Although the principal is the key person for planning educational change, "the effectiveness of a plan for change may depend on the organizational health of the school rather than the adequacy of the plan." Clark and Fairman identify ten dimensions of organizational health that principals can use to rate their schools before deciding on potential changes: (1) clarity and acceptance of goals, (2) free vertical and horizontal communication, (3) equitable distribution of power between subordinates and superordinates, (4) effective coordination of resources, (5) staff cohesiveness, (6) morale, (7) freedom of staff to be innovative, (8) autonomy in maintaining goals while managing outside demands, (9) adaptation to demands of the environment, and (10) problem-solving adequacy.

If any of these dimensions cannot be rated on a high level, then the leader should follow one or more strategies to improve organizational health, such as team training, feedback survey, role workshop, organizational problem-solving, and organizational improvement.

When these dimensions, or conditions, have all been met, then a training program for the proposed change can be initiated for the school staff. Here again, the principal is the one to determine "(1) the need for a proposed change; (2) specific training needs; (3) strategies for specific knowledge and skill development; and (4) a monitoring system for ascertaining the effectiveness of the training program." At this point, the principal should be ready to begin meeting with school staff to discuss innovative change.

2 **Clausen, Thomas G**. *The Principal as Change Facilitator.* Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Department of Education, July 1985. 58 pages. ED 262 471.

Clausen reviews the literature concerning the role of the principal in educational change and highlights the elements that, according to the research, "make principals more effective and efficient change agents." Although it is a human trait to resist change, this impulse can be mitigated by communication, involvement (probably the most important), and encouragement/support.

The research findings agree, says Clausen, that "the difference between average and high-performing principals is that effective principals are proactive." Successful principals hold to and impart to others some sort of vision that embraces both a view of what they want their schools to become and a vision of the change process itself. Although a great range of change facilitator styles has been suggested, "the most desirable style to improve student achievement is not known."

Innovations succeed more often when responsibility for facilitating change is shared by more than one person. In addition to the principal, other change facilitators can be assistant principals, teachers, or people specifically assigned to that role. Sharing the role provides balance in the administrative system and responds to needs that the principal either has no time for or is not trained for.

Although the principal's role as a change agent is becoming more clearly understood, few principals are trained or prepared to direct the change process. One need is to create a school environment that is conducive to the introduction of change. Concerns about facilitating change are not static, and each principal should be prepared to deal with these challenges in the manner that best suits him or her as an individual.

The complexity and diversity of school change should serve to remind that improvement develops slowly. Long-term support of all phases of the project are necessary before critical evaluation will yield meaningful data. Clausen concludes his study with an outline of Louisiana's Special Plan Upgrading Reading (SPUR) as a model for facilitating the principal's role as a change agent.

3 **D'Amico, Joseph J., and H. Dickson Corbett**. *How to Develop Your School's Readiness for Improvement: An Analysis Process and Recommendations.* Philadelphia: Research for Better Schools, 1987. 39 pages. ED number not yet assigned.

D'Amico and Corbett sought to determine how the organizations and climates in different schools affect the success of implementing school improvement projects. Drawing on examples of improvement projects in several schools, the authors define eight areas of organization and climate and make recommendations for each area: resources, incentives, linkages, priorities, factions, turnover, current practices, and prior projects.

Resources refer to time for both the principal and teachers, available funds, and clerical support. Teachers need to be assured, for example, that they will be allotted time to work on the project without interfering with class time. In addition to material support, D'Amico and Corbett emphasize the principal's need to be symbolically involved in the project by attending meetings, talking with staff about their efforts, and taking other steps to "convince staff that you are serious about their improvement effort."

The principal should determine what types of incentives will

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be available for participants. Although monetary rewards are appreciated, it is also important to let teachers take the credit for the program's success.

"Linkage refers to the communication and interaction among staff." Formal linkages are the only ones that principals can successfully initiate; it is hoped that informal linkages will develop from these.

Although school priorities seem to be always in flux, the principal is responsible for keeping the improvement project high on the list.

Moderate levels of tension that cause factions can benefit a project if they encourage communication. If tension becomes counterproductive, principals need to intervene.

Although teacher turnover is high in many schools, principals should try to minimize turnover in the improvement group unless members become stagnant or recalcitrant.

If the project will require significant changes or growth by the staff, the principal can emphasize the incremental structure and "build success at some level into every phase of the improvement effort."

Teachers who, during previous years, have been involved in several different projects that are still incomplete will probably be less than committed toward a new one. Principals should do all they can to "link new improvement projects to current ones."

The authors conclude that "when these eight factors were favorable, implementation of 'good ideas' seemed to go smoothly and the intended improvements took hold."

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4 **Hall, Gene E., and Frances M. Guzman**. "Sources of Leadership for Change in High Schools." Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, Louisiana, April 1984. 25 pages. ED 250 815.

"In examining the dynamics of change processes in high schools, this study makes initial interpretations about school officials who serve as change facilitators," Hall and Guzman say. The roles that these officials (principals and assistant principals, department heads, central office personnel, and teachers) exhibit are identified as Source of the Innovation, Impetus, and Implementation Facilitator. In their fieldwork, the authors discovered that most innovations originate outside the school; that is, they are mandated by the central office.

Among personnel at the school site, the principal, as expected, is most commonly the one to introduce change. The authors describe sample principal behaviors they surveyed in high schools. For example, the "active change facilitator" principal "goes out of her way to involve people in decisions as often as possible, unless she identifies it specifically and only as her decision," whereas the less active principal "was overwhelmed by district pressure and felt immobilized by them. He specifically did what was expected but with no overall plan."

Although the authors had expected to find that department heads contributed significantly to changes in schools, their observations did not support this assumption. Those department heads who functioned as change agents did so because their role was defined as such by the principal. The authors hypothesize that the absence of training and of job definition are the major culprits responsible for department heads not initiating change.

The authors also report that when principals join with assistant principals and deans to form a Change Facilitator Team, changes are much more likely to be implemented. "It appears that in more active schools there is more job sharing between the assistant principals and the principals."

Although most school innovations originate in the central office, the authors conclude that district administrators' contribution as "a dynamic force for change" is minimal because of their numerous other duties and concentration on maintaining the status quo.

Few teachers emerge as change facilitators; they mostly respond to suggestions from above. The changes made by those who are innovators usually only "affect the teachers' own classroom and responsibilities."

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5 **Hord, Shirley M., and Sheila C. Murphy**. "The High School Department Head: Powerful or Powerless in Guiding Change?" Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Chicago, April 1985. 43 pages. ED 271 806.

During Hord and Murphy's three-year study, "behaviors of heads were identified and organized into functions that were then combined to describe the varying roles, from powerful to powerless, that department heads play in change." In terms of functions, the head serves as a communication liaison, serves as department manager, assists teachers in improving performance, participates in program improvement and change, and fosters cooperative relationships. The roles consist of Communicator, Coordinating Manager, Emerging Assister, Teacher Improver, Program Improver, and Evaluating Administrator. Hord and Murphy demonstrate "how the accumulation of additional functions increases the power of the role."

The researchers make several recommendations for considering the role of the department head. First, the department head should be formally recognized as a guide for change. The physical arrangement of all teachers in a department, including the head, should be as close as possible. To take advantage of this proximity, heads should discuss not only content but instruction with teachers. School administrators must communicate their recognition of the head as a change agent in order for him or her to function effectively.

Second, schools need to establish well-defined policies that clearly outline the head's responsibility for change. Essential to this responsibility is planning and leading inservice programs for teachers. Also, department heads should become more like administrators with their attendant authority. And, of course, the head must be allotted the time to fulfill these duties.

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6 **Huddle, Eugene**. "All That Glitters Isn't Gold—Four Steps to School Improvement." *NASSP Bulletin* 71, 499 (May 1987): 80-86. EJ 353 903.

According to Huddle, "The principal's personal vision, involvement, and commitment are vital to the success of any school improvement project." Using case studies from ten states where schools were initiating new improvement programs, Huddle determined what principal behaviors had most likely contributed to the programs' success. He describes four stages of development for these programs and suggests appropriate principal behaviors for each stage.

For an improvement program to get an energetic start (Stage I—Initiation), it is important for school staff to feel that there is, first, something that needs to be improved and, second, that it is capable of being improved. "Effective principals raise concern just enough to create movement and motivation to improve."

Before presenting a new program to the staff, the principal also needs to determine that it will not conflict seriously with the school's accepted philosophy and goals and that the program's usefulness has been verified in other schools. Of special importance for minimizing frustration and improving chances for success, the principal should make certain that not too many programs are being conducted at the same time.

Another key to initiating improvement is collegial relationships. A staff that has been led by the principal to work together closely and harmoniously will be much more likely to implement improvements. Also important for initiation of change is community sup-

port that has been campaigned for by the principal.

Stage II—Initial Implementation—requires specific and well-defined organizational leadership by the principal. Undoubtedly, Huddle says, "it is crucial to develop training for the staff members who will use the new program." As with any prescribed program, opportunities for minor changes that will not alter the program's overall mission should be left open.

After initial training has been completed, "technical assistance and peer support with practice are most critical" in Stage III—Full Implementation. The principal is responsible for ensuring that enough data are being collected to determine how the new program is affecting students. This is also the time to begin identifying those staff members who are especially responsible for the successful startup of the program and to make sure they are rewarded.

"Innovation becomes the standard approach" in Stage IV—Institutionalization. In order for this to happen, staff need to see that the program has actually produced the intended results. Principals should clearly communicate to them that the kinds of enduring, beneficial goals they are working toward cannot be accomplished without the willingness to make long-term commitments.

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7 **Huling-Austin, Leslie; Suzanne Stiegelbauer; and Deborah Muscella.** "High School Principals: Their Role in Guiding Change." Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Chicago, April 1985. 37 pages. ED 271 807.

After a three-year study in thirty American high schools, Huling-Austin and her colleagues categorized six principal behaviors that contribute to school improvement: (1) vision and goal setting, (2) structuring the school as a workplace, (3) managing change, (4) collaborating and delegating, (5) decision-making, and (6) guiding and supporting. The authors present examples of positive behaviors for each category, as well as examples of behaviors that do not contribute to school improvement.

Most of the schools studied had leadership teams, all of which "were dependent in some way on the principal." The essential principal characteristic was some form of "push" that was not dependent on the administrative technique used. The authors explain that "the difference in success in approaching the change was one of principal and teacher *involvement* directed to the necessary changes, rather than a reliance simply on normal administrative channels and roles."

The authors recommend two general areas for improving the effectiveness of school change. First is the change facilitating roles of principals, who can analyze their behaviors to see which may or may not be contributing to school change.

Concerning the second area—configuration of leadership—principals should "employ a variety of persons for the different changes being implemented" and "structure leadership teams based on available resources and situation-specific needs rather than formal titles or positions."

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8 **Kersten, Thomas A., and Charles A. Sloan.** "Principal: Manager or Change Agent?" *Catalyst for Change* 15, 1 (Fall 1985): 24-27. EJ 327 926.

Whereas a manager is interested in maintaining the current organization, a leader evaluates needs and plans and directs growth. Today one of the principal's primary functions is seen as a promoter of change that will improve instruction, but little research has been done on the principal's role as a catalyst. "Catalyst principals create an atmosphere conducive to change through the development of building norms which reinforce the value of new ideas. [They] share in the excitement of change and readily communicate this to their subordinates."

For his doctoral dissertation, Kersten studied principals' manager/change agent behaviors in 34 elementary, 33 junior high, and 35 high schools in Illinois. The Principal Behavior Profile, an instrument that requires the respondent to differentiate between manager and change agent roles, was completed by the principal and six faculty members at each school. "On each item," say the authors, "principals saw their behavior as primarily change-agent." Faculty members who were surveyed generally agreed with the principals' assessments of themselves.

Manipulation of the data revealed that there was little difference in perceived behavior among the different levels of principals. "Even though they administered three distinct levels, principals saw themselves performing common roles within their schools and utilizing similar behavior in order to achieve success," the authors say.

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9 **Lipham, James M.** "Leadership and Decision Making for Effective Educational Change." *The Executive Review* 3, 8 (May 1983): 2-6. ED 233 461.

Using both rationalistic and naturalistic research theories for studying over 100 schools across the nation recognized as "more unique than typical," Lipham identifies seven phases for integrating change in schools.

In phase I, the principal consults with teachers and other experts to canvass current norms and to consider the many possibilities open to the school. As the new program is initiated in the second phase, the principal is recognized as responsible for directing the route for change. In phase III, the principal must be certain that information about the incumbent change is disseminated throughout the school's staff.

As the change becomes part of teacher routine, it becomes less

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innovative and, instead, becomes more the norm during phase IV. No matter how successful a new program is, principals should not let satisfaction prevent them from investigating refinements for the program (phase V). Renewing the innovation by applying these refinements moves the program back into the realm of innovation (phase VI). Finally, in phase VII, the principal institutes a system for continuing evaluation of the program so that it never becomes victim to inertia.

Throughout the phases, "schools should adopt decision-making structures and strategies which allow for maximum, yet selective, involvement of teachers in the decision-making process."

10 **McCoy, Susan S., and Geralyn R. Shreve**. "Principals—Why Are Some More Successful Than Others in Implementing Change?" *NASSP Bulletin* 67, 464 (September 1983): 96-103. EJ 286 643.

McCoy and Shreve visited, interviewed, and provided self-administered instruments to ten principals (six high school and four elementary) recognized for successfully implementing change. Guided by their findings, the authors developed an Interaction Model illustrating five behaviors of principals who are effective in instituting change in their schools.

The first, or basic, component of the model is self-actualization and commitment. Self-actualizing principals are "able and willing to commit themselves to changes they [feel] would better meet the needs of others and at the same time bring a sense of self-satisfaction."

The second component is adaptability. The ten principals used various leadership styles according to the demands of the situation. They also were flexible in meeting the needs of their followers. Skill in interpersonal relationships is the third component; principals' interactions with subordinates are essential to any improvement plan. Although the principals involved followers in decision-making, they also maintained "autonomy and control of the *implementation* process."

The fourth component consists of six strategies the principals used in interacting with others to make sure the implementation succeeded: effective two-way communications, providing personnel and other resources, accessibility to all affected people, use of members' contributed strengths, opportunities for growth and development of both principal and subordinates, and risk taking.

"Finally," say the authors, "the successful principal recognizes the differences in people—their motivational needs and their levels of self-development in a particular situation." In response, followers will become motivated and committed to the planned change.

11 **Walker, Terrance L., and Judith F. Vogt**. "The School Administrator as Change Agent: Skills for the Future." *NASSP Bulletin* 71, 502 (November 1987): 41-48. EJ 364 739.

"Initiating change without being knowledgeable about change theory and practice can be as counterproductive as doing nothing," say Walker and Vogt. To help school administrators become "change proficient," the authors outline a theory of planned change and list a number of skills needed by change agents.

Their theoretical model, conceived by Lewin (1958) and expanded by Lippitt, Watson, and Westley (1958), consists of five phases. In phase 1—"Development of a Need for Change"—the change agent "unfreezes" the present behavior in the organization, creating an awareness of the need for change. "Establishment of a Change Relationship" occurs in phase 2, where the change agent builds a collaborative, trusting relationship with the client organization.

Phase 3—"Working toward Change (Moving)"—consists of three subphases: diagnosing the problem, setting goals and measuring motivation for change, and implementing the plans. In this phase, the change agent also takes into account the causes of resistance to change. Phase 4 is "Generalization and Stabilization of Change (Refreezing)." New norms and structures help to maintain the momentum for change.

The administrator ceases his or her role as change agent and resumes the role of school administrator in phase 5—"Achieving a Terminal Relationship." The administrator continues, however, to evaluate the results of the change, make modifications as needed, and train others in the change process.

Walker and Vogt go on to list thirty-two change agent skills in seven categories: Intrapersonal (an example is understanding one's own motivation to seek change), Facilitating Need for Change, Collaboration (for instance, using diagnostic instruments and diagnosing "in terms of causes rather than 'goods' or 'bads'"), Action Planning (arriving at group decisions), Plan Implementation (building morale as people try to change), Evaluation of Change Plan Results, and Terminal Relationships (enlisting the participation of others).

"In the future," say the authors, skills such as these "will be required of school administrators as part of a basic battery of proven competencies necessary to be successful on the job."

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